

Building Blocks

In the Home Learning area on the school website, there is a section called 'Building Blocks'. This offers support on how to break down the children's learning in maths, writing and reading. Please go and have a look at this section if you think it might be useful for your child.

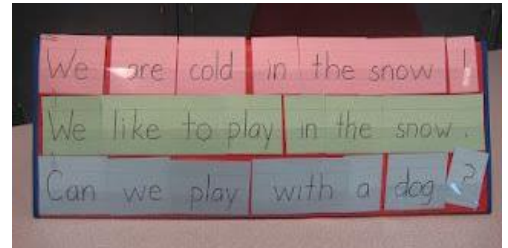
Writing

As well as the information provided in the Building Blocks, this document details some strategies we use in school to support children with their sentence construction and writing tasks.

Sentence building activity

When generating ideas for a sentence, we would always encourage children to say their sentence aloud first. This allows an adult to check it makes sense before they attempt to write it down.

For this particular activity, the adult would write the child's sentence down, cut up the individual words and shuffle them all up. Then the child would have to put the words back into the correct order.



Handy hint! Children are told to look out for a word beginning with a capital letter and the word that is followed by a full stop. This can be a useful starting point for putting the sentence back into the correct sequence.

Adjective work - Fill in the Gap activity

When working on making our sentences more interesting, we often start by adding an adjective. Adjectives help the reader create a picture of what we are writing about in their mind. This is a great opportunity to expand and develop children's vocabulary. Therefore, we do not worry about generating the whole sentence to start with. We give children a sentence with a missing word and pose the question 'What adjective could we add to our sentence to make it more interesting?'

For example, The _____ trees swayed in the wind.

Option1

You could ask your child for ideas of what would make sense in the gap and support them with using their phonics to spell it. Feel free to challenge their suggestion if you think they could make it more exciting! For example, we challenge the children for better word choices when vocabulary such as 'big' or 'nice' are given.

Option 2

You could give the children 5 word choices to choose from. Ask them which word do they think is the best adjective for the sentence? By doing this, you can help expand the children's vocabulary by carefully selecting words that they may not have normally used. If possible, try to use decodable words, so children can apply their phonics skills when trying to read them.

leafy	tall	towering
bare	green	

Writing descriptions

Whether it is a task to write a description of a setting or a person, the task can be simplified by completing a labelling activity first.

Give children a picture of what they need to describe and identify all the 'nouns'. (A noun is a person, place or thing.) Label them using one colour.

Then ask the children how might they describe the nouns? What do they **look** like? Generate some adjectives together. (Adjectives are describing words.) Using a different colour, get children to add one adjective to each one of the labelled nouns.



Then ask them to put their adjective and noun into a sentence. Encourage them to say it aloud before writing. It does not matter if it is a simple sentence, but it must be punctuated properly! No excuses for missing capital letters at the start of a sentence and a full stop at the end.

Storyboard

To help children sequence a story, we often ask the children to start by drawing a storyboard. We usually add 2-3 key words to each box. This helps with the children's retelling of the story and supports them with key spellings.

Once the storyboard is complete, we often rehearse telling the story aloud using the pictures. This then gives the adult the opportunity to remind the child to use the keywords they have written down. We would encourage children to write one or two sentences for each box. Here is an example of a storyboard for 'Little Red Riding Hood'.

Little Red Riding Hood



Wolf
Little Red Riding Hood
Forest



Cottage
Grandma
cakes



disguise
shocked
terrified



rescue
axe

Sometimes writing the whole story can be a challenge, so children could just write part of the story. For example, the beginning or the end.

Keywords

In school, we support children with the spelling of keywords for their writing. These are often words that could be tricky to spell or words that will reoccur several times in their writing. E.g. characters names, places and good adjective ideas. By supplying the children with these key words, it allows them to focus their attention on structuring each sentence correctly.

If your child finds spelling hard, we would suggest you form the list of keywords together. The children could even draw a picture next to each word as a reminder of their meaning.

When completing English tasks, please feel free to do what you think is most appropriate and manageable for your child. We hope these ideas are useful.

